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ABSTRACT

The Scholastic Transition and Resource System Program (Project STARS) sought to identify gifted and talented students of limited English proficiency and provide them with the help needed to succeed in advanced and basic content area and vocational/technical courses. The 1-year, federally-funded program served 321 students at 3 New York City high schools. Students received instruction in English as a Second Language (ESL), native language arts (for Spanish- and French-speaking students), content area courses, and career-related courses taught bilingually or with an ESL approach. Noninstructional activities included guidance/career advisement, staff development, parent participation, and curriculum development. Students met program objectives for mastery in ESL but not in content area subjects. Objectives were met for student attendance but not curriculum development. Lack of data prevented determination of whether guidance/career advisement, staff development, or parental involvement objectives were met. Recommendations for improvement include revision of content area performance objectives to reflect more realistic achievement levels, and improved data reporting in parent involvement, staff development, and career advisement. (MSE)

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OREA Report

EVALUATION SECTION REPORT

SCHOLARLY TRANSITION AND RESOURCE SYSTEMS

(PROJECT STARS)

1987-88

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EVALUATION SECTION

John Schoener, Chief Administrator

June 1989

EVALUATION SECTION REPORT

SCHOLARLY TRANSITION AND RESOURCE SYSTEMS

(PROJECT STARS)

1987-88

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SCHOLASTIC TRANSITION AND RESOURCE SYSTEM
PROJECT STARS*
1987-88

SUMMARY

- Project STARS was fully implemented. During the 1987-1988 school year, eligible limited English proficient (LEP) students received instruction in English as a Second Language (E.S.L.) and content area subjects. The project provided staff and curriculum development as well as parental involvement activities.

- Students met the objectives for mastery in E.S.L. but not in content area subjects. The project met the student attendance but not the curriculum development objective. Lack of data prevented determination of whether it met objectives in guidance/career advisement, staff development, or parental involvement.

The Scholastic Transition and Resource System program (Project STARS) sought to identify gifted and talented LEP students and to provide them with the help needed to succeed in advanced as well as basic content area and vocational/technical courses. Funded for one year under Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, it served 321 students at three high schools in Queens.

Students at all sites received instruction in English as a second language (E.S.L.), native language arts (for Spanish- and French-speaking students), content area courses and career-related courses, taught bilingually or with an E.S.L. approach. The project's noninstructional activities included guidance/career advisement, staff development, parental participatory activities, and curriculum development. The Language Assessment Battery (LAB), length of time in the United States, native country school records, and teacher recommendations determined program eligibility.

The Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment assessed student achievement in E.S.L. with the LAB; mathematics, computer science, social studies, and science with teacher-made tests; and attendance with program and school records. Quantitative analysis of student performance indicates that Project STARS achieved its objectives in E.S.L. and student attendance. It did not achieve the content area or the curriculum development objectives. The project did not provide

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*This summary is based on the final evaluation of the "Scholastic Transition and Resource System (Project STARS) 1987-88" prepared by the OREA Bilingual Education Evaluation Unit.

the data necessary to determine whether it accomplished its objectives in guidance/career advisement, staff development, or parental involvement.

The conclusions, based on the findings of this evaluation, lead to the following recommendations:

- Revise performance objectives in content area subjects to reflect more realistic achievement levels.

- The project should report data in the areas of parental involvement, staff development, and career advisement so it can be determined whether or not it met its proposed objectives.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

I. INTRODUCTION..... 1

School and Community Context..... 1
Staff..... 1
Andrew Jackson High School..... 1
Flushing High School..... 2
Richmond Hill High School..... 2
Organizational Structure..... 2
Student Characteristics..... 3
Richmond Hill High School..... 5
Flushing High School..... 5
Andrew Jackson High School..... 6
Student Placement, Programming, and Mainstreaming..... 7

II. EVALUATION FINDINGS..... 9

Instructional Activities..... 9
English as a Second Language..... 9
Content Area Subjects..... 11
Noninstructional Activities..... 14
Attendance..... 14
Guidance/Career Advisement..... 17
Staff Development..... 17
Curriculum Development..... 18
Parental Involvement..... 18
Student Activities and Accomplishments..... 19

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....21

LIST OF TABLES

PAGE

TABLE 1: Number of Project Students by Age and Grade..... 4

TABLE 2: Pretest/Posttest N.C.E. Differences on the Language Assessment Battery, by Grade..... 12

TABLE 3: Student Achievement in Content Area Subjects..... 15

TABLE 4: Comparison of Program and Schoolwide Attendance... 16

I. INTRODUCTION

Scholarly Transition and Resource Systems (Project STARS) sought to identify gifted and talented students of limited English proficiency (LEP) and to provide them with the help needed to succeed in basic and advanced content area and vocational/technical courses.

Original project sites were Flushing High School, Andrew Jackson High School, and William Cullen Bryant High School--all in Queens. However, largely because of the project's delayed start-up, Bryant opted out of the project and was replaced by Richmond Hill High School, also in Queens.

SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY CONTEXT

The schools, which share the problem of a lack of space, are located in middle class neighborhoods of single-family homes. All three schools enroll substantial numbers of students whose native languages are other than English; the ethnic-linguistic makeup of the student bodies varies from site to site.

STAFF

In addition to the project director, the Title VII-funded staff at each school consisted of a resource specialist funded on a 60 percent basis and a full-time educational assistant.

Andrew Jackson High School

The resource specialist had a B.A., had taught for three years, and had been a paraprofessional for four years. He was fluent in Haitian Creole as well as French. The paraprofessional

was also fluent in both Haitian Creole and French. She had seven years' experience, one in the bilingual/E.S.L. field.

Flushing High School

The resource specialist at this school had a master's degree, was fluent in Spanish and French, and had ten years' teaching experience. The paraprofessional spoke Chinese, had one year of experience, and had just begun to study for a bachelor's degree.

Richmond Hill High School

The resource specialist was also a grade advisor and an E.S.L. teacher. He had a master's degree; spoke Spanish, French, and Italian; and had 15 years of teaching experience. The paraprofessional had one year's experience.

The project director had taught French and Spanish for ten years, possessed master's degrees in bilingual education and administration and supervision, and had several years of supervisory experience.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Project STARS was centrally administered, with the project director having frequent contact with each site. She visited each site at least once a week. During these visits she met with the STARS resource specialist, the Assistant Principal (A.P.) supervising the project, and less frequently, with the principal. The STARS resource specialists shared information, discussed problems with, and sought advice from each other.

An A.P. at each site supervised the Title VII resource specialist and an educational assistant. The administrators of each site were responsible for selecting Title VII staff.

At Flushing High School, both the principal and the supervising A.P. supported bilingual education. The principal of Richmond Hill also supported the program. At Andrew Jackson, Project STARS was part of the foreign languages department. While the principal, who spoke French and Spanish, supported bilingual education, other administrators and mainstream teachers had mixed feelings about it.

STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

In the current year, Project STARS served a total of 321 students: 139 at Flushing, 105 at Andrew Jackson, and 77 at Richmond Hill. Most of the students were born in Haiti. Sizable numbers came from the Dominican Republic, Colombia, Korea, China, Taiwan, and Ecuador.

The program supplied age and grade information for 311 students. While more students were in the eleventh grade than any other grade, the students were fairly evenly distributed among grades nine through twelve. (See Table 1.) Approximately one-half the project students were overage for their grade, although this varied by site (41 percent in Flushing High School to 75 percent in Andrew Jackson High School).

TABLE 1

Number of Project Students by Age and Grade

Age	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	TOTAL
13	1				1
14	7				7
15	22	11	1		34
16	6	28	18	2	54
17	13	26	27	8	74
18	13	12	28	20	73
19	2	7	16	18	43
20	2	2	9	9	22
21		1	4	3	3
TOTAL	66	87	101	57	311*

Overage Students	Programwide				
Number	36	48	55	27	166
Percent	54.5	55.2	54.5	47.4	53.4

Overage Students	Flushing				
Number	3	15	25	12	55
Percent	18.8	37.5	47.2	46.2	40.7

Overage Students	Richmond Hill				
Number	7	10	12	6	35
Percent	53.8	50.0	52.2	33.3	47.3

Overage Students	Andrew Jackson				
Number	26	23	18	9	76
Percent	70.3	85.2	72.0	69.2	74.5

Note. Shaded boxes indicate expected age range for grade.

*Data were missing for 10 students.

- More than half of the project students were overage for their grade.
- Andrew Jackson had the highest percentage of overage students (75 percent).

Richmond Hill High School

Richmond Hill High School was in an area where there were very few apartment buildings; most of the students' parents were homeowners. All of the parents worked, and could be considered middle class. The families were upwardly mobile.

One hundred and twenty-three of Richmond Hill's 1,932 students were LEP, of whom the largest number (76) were Spanish speakers. The remaining students were native speakers of Polish, Chinese, Haitian Creole, Vietnamese, and other Asian and European languages. Over one-half of the 77 students in STARS were Hispanic. Students from different ethnic-linguistic groups (Hispanic, Chinese, Korean, etc.) tended to socialize exclusively with members of their own group. However, school and project staff members encouraged socialization between groups.

Flushing High School

Four hundred and fifty-five of Flushing's 2,214 students were LEP. Of those, two-thirds were Spanish speakers. Other languages spoken by Flushing students included Korean, Chinese, Haitian Creole/French, Farsi, Persian, and Dari, as well as other European, Asian, Middle Eastern, and African languages. Flushing's Hispanic population has been growing rapidly, mostly because of an influx of students from the Dominican Republic. Students from the Dominican Republic and from rural areas of the People's Republic of China reportedly had the greatest academic deficits. New arrivals from rural areas (e.g., the Dominican Republic and the People's Republic of China) frequently had

scanty educational backgrounds, and their families were poor. Many of these students worked part time to supplement family income.

Asian students, particularly South Koreans and Indians, came from metropolitan areas and were academically well prepared. They were ambitious, with many expressing interest in becoming doctors, lawyers, or engineers. However, many Asian and Middle Eastern students reportedly had difficulty adjusting to American culture, which was radically different from theirs.

Andrew Jackson High School

Of the 2,446 students at Andrew Jackson High School, 100 were LEP, mostly speakers of Haitian Creole. Most students' families were working class and a few were below the poverty level. Few students worked after school. High parental expectations reportedly made Haitian students extremely achievement oriented. Their attendance and graduation rates were high and their dropout rates low.

A growing number of Haitian students came from rural areas where the educational system was weak. They arrived in this country with serious educational deficits, knowing only Haitian Creole. They needed instruction in French as well as in English. Since the Haitian educational system has a strong humanities orientation, even students with a relatively strong educational background were deficient in science and mathematics.

STUDENT PLACEMENT, PROGRAMMING, AND MAINSTREAMING

Project STARS selected its participants on the basis of: a score below the twentieth percentile on the Language Assessment Battery (LAB)*, two years or fewer residence in the United States, school records from the native country demonstrating above-average achievement, recommendations from teachers and guidance counselors, and personal interviews with the project resource teacher.

The program treated mainstreaming as a planned, gradual process. A student who reached the twenty-first percentile of the LAB was considered ready for mainstreaming, but had the option of remaining in the program. The resource specialists felt that using the twenty-first percentile (on the LAB) as the criterion for mainstreaming allowed the mainstreaming of many students before they were ready. They also indicated that there were too few bilingual courses. Students usually remained in the schools' bilingual programs for one to two years before they were mainstreamed.

One teacher, who was also a grade advisor, criticized the program for mainstreaming too many students prematurely. She indicated that precipitous mainstreaming occurred because there

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*The Language Assessment Battery (LAB) was developed by the Board of Education of the City of New York to measure the English-language proficiency of nonnative speakers of English in order to determine whether their level of English proficiency is sufficient to enable them to participate effectively in classes taught in English. Students scoring below the twenty-first percentile on the LAB are entitled to bilingual and E.S.L. services.

were not enough advanced bilingual content area classes and because the twenty-first percentile cutoff on the LAB was unrealistically low.

II. EVALUATION FINDINGS

The Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (OREA) evaluated Project STARS by examining standardized test results and program records, conducting interviews, and observing classes.

INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Project STARS proposed objectives in the areas of E.S.L.; and the content areas of mathematics, computer science, social studies, and science.

English as a Second Language

- As a result of participating in the program, E.S.L. students will make statistically significant gains in English language proficiency, as measured by the LAB.

Implementation. In addition to two semesters each of basic, intermediate, and advanced E.S.L., Flushing High School offered advanced E.S.L. students one semester of transitional (i.e., pre-mainstreaming) English and two semesters of writing clinic.

Elementary E.S.L. met for three periods per day, intermediate met for two periods, and advanced and transitional met for one period. Students in the advanced and transitional E.S.L. classes took one period per day of writing clinic. English Department faculty members taught the transitional class. Paraprofessionals served in beginning- and intermediate-level classes. Classes usually had enrollments of 20-25 students;

advanced E.S.L. had 30-34 students. A committee of teachers and the A.P. of E.S.L. selected instructional materials.

Andrew Jackson High School provided basic, intermediate, and advanced E.S.L. both semesters and transitional E.S.L. during the fall. Enrollment in tax-levy classes averaged 30; enrollment in Chapter 1 classes was 15. The beginning level stressed listening and speaking, the intermediate level stressed reading, and the advanced course stressed writing. The coordinator said that the program needed more E.S.L. materials and resources.

Richmond Hill High School offered basic, intermediate, and advanced E.S.L. classes. A paraprofessional assisted in each class. The basic level focused on basic skills, the intermediate level on business letters, and the advanced level on public speaking. Average class size was 28 students. The E.S.L. teachers jointly chose the curricular materials.

Eight Project STARS students were among the 23 students in a writing clinic class observed by an OREA field consultant. The aim of the lesson was to write an essay on how to travel in New York City. English was the language of instruction. Before the students wrote, the teacher used a question-and-answer technique to go over vocabulary, including idioms and grammar, particularly prepositions. The students then wrote sentences on the board and discussed them. The teacher was supportive and the students were attentive.

Outcomes. To assess students' achievement in English, OREA data analysts computed a correlated *t*-test on students' Normal

Curve Equivalent (N.C.E.)* scores on the LAB. The t-test determined whether the difference between pretest and posttest mean scores was significantly greater than would be expected from chance variation alone. Raw scores were converted to N.C.E. scores.

The project provided complete LAB scores for 122 students. (See Table 2.) N.C.E. gains for each grade, each school, and for the total number of students were statistically significant ($p < .05$). The program met its E.S.L. objective.

In addition, students enrolled in E.S.L. classes achieved passing rates of 95 percent in the fall and 91 percent in the spring. Project STARS students enrolled in mainstream English classes achieved passing rates of 85 percent in the fall and 91 percent in the spring.

Effect sizes of gains were at least moderate, but usually high. This meant that the differences in N.C.E.s from pretest to posttest were of either moderately or highly educationally meaningful.

Content Area Subjects

- Eighty-five percent of all target students will achieve a passing grade of 85 percent or better in mathematics, computer science, social studies, and science, as indicated by results on teacher-made final tests, using tabulation of grade results.

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*Raw scores were converted to N.C.E. scores which are normalized standard scores. They have the advantage of forming an equal interval scale so that scores and gains can be averaged. For the norming population, N.C.E.s have a mean of 50, a standard deviation of approximately 20, and a range from one to 99. Scores can be compared to the norming population.

TABLE 2

Pretest/Posttest N.C.E. Differences on
the Language Assessment Battery, by School and Grade

Grade	Number of students	Pretest Mean	Pretest S.D.	Posttest Mean	Posttest S.D.	Difference Mean	Difference S.D.	t Value	Effect Size
9	22	8.7	9.0	17.6	15.5	9.0	10.4	4.03*	.87
10	39	11.4	8.6	23.0	11.3	11.6	8.8	8.17*	1.32
11	37	14.4	8.4	22.3	15.4	7.9	13.3	3.63*	.59
12	24	15.9	8.4	25.9	13.3	10.0	9.7	5.09*	1.03
TOTAL	122	12.7	8.8	22.4	13.9	9.7	10.8	9.95*	.90
				Site Results					
Flushing	39	14.0	7.5	30.4	12.7	16.3	10.4	9.86*	1.57
Richmond Hill	40	14.0	9.7	21.6	13.7	7.6	9.0	5.33*	.84
Andrew Jackson	43	10.3	8.8	15.9	11.4	5.6	9.9	3.69*	.57

*$p < .05$

- Students at all grade levels and at all schools showed significant pretest/posttest gains.

Implementation. Project STARS students were enrolled in mathematics, science, and social studies. Some courses were bilingual, others were taught with an E.S.L. approach, and others were mainstream.

Project students took Haitian Creole/English bilingual classes in mathematics and science. They took a French/English bilingual class in social studies. Since there were not enough bilingual teachers, monolingual teachers taught science and social studies using an E.S.L. approach.

Project STARS students took bilingual (Spanish/English) social studies and mathematics. They also took science and social studies classes which were taught using an E.S.L. approach. The project coordinator felt that more bilingual content area classes were needed, particularly in science, because LEP students were not doing very well in this subject area.

In a general science class of 22 students, the teacher used English exclusively, but the students conversed among themselves in French. The lesson was on the differences between plants and animals. The principal curricular material used was a study sheet containing illustrations of flesh-eating mammals. The students participated enthusiastically and seemed to be enjoying the lesson. A paraprofessional provided translations and individualized instruction for those in need.

Outcomes. The passing criterion for these courses was established at 85 percent presumably because the target

population was gifted and talented LEP students. However, the objective appeared to be far too ambitious for the project students; it was not achieved for any of the courses at any of the sites. (See Table 3.)

If the passing criterion had been 65 percent as was regularly used in New York City high schools, this would have been achieved by at least 80 percent of the students at every site and in every area, except mathematics students at Andrew Jackson in the spring.

NONINSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Attendance

- The attendance rate of target students will be 10 percent to 15 percent greater than mainstream students as indicated by school records, tabulating and comparing the percentage of attendance of program students and mainstream students.

Since the school's attendance rate included the attendance of program students, a z-test* for the significance of a proportion was used to assess the objective. This procedure determines whether the difference between one proportion (the program's attendance) and a standard proportion (the school's attendance) is greater than what can be expected by chance variation. The test showed that the attendance of STARS students at all three sites was significantly higher ($p < .05$) than that of the schools. (See Table 4). The program achieved its attendance objective.

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*Bruning, J.L. and Kintz, B.C., Computational Handbook of Statistics, (Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1968).

TABLE 3

Student Achievement in Content Area Subjects

Site	Area	FALL		SPRING	
		Number of Students	Percent Passing[a]	Number of Students	Percent Passing[a]
Flushing	Math	92	51.1	98	51.0
	Science	64	46.9	72	50.0
	Social Studies	80	51.2	96	55.2
Richmond Hill	Math	42	40.5	60	55.0
	Science	32	25.0	48	10.4
	Social Studies	46	32.6	73	20.5
Andrew Jackson	Math	79	10.1	75	2.7
	Science	68	27.9	67	0
	Social Studies	77	35.1	80	27.5
TOTAL	Math	213	33.8	233	36.5
	Science	164	34.8	187	21.9
	Social Studies	203	40.9	249	36.1

[a]Passing criterion for the program was established at 85 percent.

- At no site and in no subjects did 70 percent of the students earn grades of least 85 percent.

TABLE 4

Comparison of Program and Schoolwide Attendance

School	PROGRAM STUDENTS Fall Number	Fall Attendance	Spring Number	Spring Attendance	Schoolwide Attendance
Flushing	97	97.4	98	97.6	88.5
Richmond Hill	51	96.3	74	94.5	81.0
Andrew Jackson	87	93.0	100	92.4	77.3
TOTAL	235	95.5	272	94.9	

- The attendance rate for project students was over 90 percent at all three sites both semesters.
- The schoolwide attendance rates were from 77 to 88 percent, lower than the comparable attendance rate of Project STARS students at the same schools.

Guidance/Career Advisement

- Each student in the program will meet with the talent specialist for career advisement at least two times during the school year on an individual basis as indicated by program records and by calculating the number served and frequency of meetings.

The project did not provide the information needed to evaluate the objective as proposed.

Staff Development

- Ninety percent of program staff will demonstrate professional growth by passing and completing courses of study as indicated by college transcripts and by attending in-service training sessions as indicated by certificates and attendance records.

No Title VII-funded staff member enrolled in a college course. However, Title VII funds paid for two courses for a parent trainer: Multicultural Aspects of Counseling and Vocational Assessment.

STARS did not provide information on the number of in-service training sessions the Title VII-funded educational assistants or the three resource specialists attended.

All three schools had extensive staff development activities, many of which were directly relevant to the needs of LEP students. For example, Flushing participated in an outside workshop on computerizing the bilingual office and in a boroughwide conference on teaching N.L.A. In addition, an A.P. at Jackson delivered a workshop on the black immigrant student. The Project STARS coordinator also organized in-school and central staff development workshops, as well as a workshop at St. John's University.

Because of the lack of specific information, it was impossible to determine whether Project STARS met its staff development objective.

Curriculum Development

- Project staff will have developed at least two appropriate testing instruments in the native languages of the project in order to properly identify and place the gifted and talented bilingual high school student as indicated by project-developed inventory.
- The curriculum specialists will have developed four interdisciplinary subject matter oriented and applied E.S.L. curriculum guides geared for the gifted and talented high school bilingual student in the ninth- and tenth-grade math, science, social studies or computer science courses as indicated by project developed inventory.

According to the project director, during the summer of 1988 curriculum development specialists developed curricula in E.S.L., American history, global history, and general science. These curricula were to be field-tested during the 1988-89 school year and made available for general use during the following year. Thus, although the project developed curricula, it did not meet all objectives proposed in this area.

Parental Involvement

- Parents of target students will demonstrate more parental involvement than parents of mainstream students by demonstrating 10 percent to 15 percent higher attendance at school functions, comparing tabulation of attendance of program and mainstream parents at school functions, as indicated by school records.

According to the project director, all three sites offered

parents six hours per week of instruction in E.S.L. and orientation to bilingual educational theories and methodologies, as proposed. There were other parental involvement activities as well. Flushing had classroom visitations and teacher interviews on open school day/night; workshops, lectures, and field trips focusing on career and study opportunities for both parents and children. The project organized a Caribbean evening at Andrew Jackson at which students performed folk dances. Andrew Jackson also held an International Day and invited the parents of participating students. Project STARS did not provide any information on parental involvement activities at Richmond Hill High School.

Although parents participated in a number of activities, none of the three schools supplied the attendance data needed to determine whether the project met its parental involvement objective.

Student Activities and Accomplishments

As a result of the project at Flushing High School, ARISTA, the national honor society, had invited LEP students to join it. Project STARS participants were becoming more active in school activities and therefore more integrated into student life.

Project students were in the Leadership Class and in the Law Club; they belonged to Participation in Government Archives Class and became peer tutors in their native languages. Other students participated in essay contests.

Project STARS provided students with on-the-job training, job opportunities, and information about employment. Project students were in the co-op program as well as in the LEP pre-coop program where students worked as volunteers at Parsons Hospital.

At Andrew Jackson, the project provided field trips, recreation, and artistic activities in which the students participated and appeared to enjoy.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A significant feature of Project STARS was the attention it provided to gifted and talented LEP students who might otherwise have been overlooked. Students were able to meet the program's objectives in English language development and attendance. They did not achieve the objectives in content area subjects; however the proposed 85 percent passing grade was a much higher standard than that used in New York City high schools.

Migration history, socioeconomic status, and to a lesser extent the need to work after school, marriage, pregnancy, and child-rearing responsibilities affected student achievement. The impact of these factors varied by site.

The project did not provide data to assess proposed objectives in staff development, parental involvement, and guidance/career advisement. The project did not meet the curriculum development objective.

The project director said that the Title VII staff was overburdened and, because of their commitment to the project, did a great deal of project-related work on their own time. For example, the resource specialists counseled students informally and contacted parents.

At Flushing High School, the project's emphasis on careers, jobs, college, and mainstreaming was realized through the co-op (work/study) program, and through the many services and activities offered by project personnel. Students with a high

grade average performed school service; an "Interpreters' Squad" was organized in which students acted as aides and received service credit; students provided peer tutoring. Disseminating information about programs, services, and opportunities was an important part of Project STARS at this site.

The program's basic strength at Richnond Hill High School was its stress on academic achievement, goal orientation, and career and college orientation. Richmond Hill provided services and activities for those students who might have otherwise remained ethnically isolated. The students became unified and integrated into the mainstream.

At Andrew Jackson, Project STARS allowed its participants to benefit culturally by providing funding for field trips and other recreational and artistic activities. The project-funded computer facilitated instruction, improved writing, engaged the students' interest, and provided them with a valuable skill.

The conclusions, based on the findings of this evaluation, lead to the following recommendations:

- Revise performance objectives in content area subjects to reflect more realistic achievement levels.
- The project should report data in the areas of parental involvement, staff development, and career advisement so it can be determined whether or not it met its proposed objectives.